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## Free Children's Book Teaches Watershed Ecology and Nonpoint Source Pollution

AUGUSTA, Maine, March 21, 2005- The Maine Coastal Program at the Maine State Planning Office has published a free environmental children's book, *The Watershed Journey of Linus Loon*. The book is entertaining and educational, and includes many illustrations. The book, designed for grades 3-7, teaches students the basics of watershed ecology and nonpoint source pollution, and encourages environmental appreciation, awareness, and stewardship.

Created by Hampden resident Josh Atwood, the story follows young Linus Loon, who must migrate to the ocean by swimming through the watershed due to a broken wing. From his home lake in northern Maine, Linus must travel through a pond, a bog, a river, and an estuary before finally reaching the ocean. Anxious about his travels, Linus initially seeks advice from the wise Lake Gnome, and later meets a local gnome in each of the ecosystems he visits. Through his friendship with the gnomes, Linus learns about biomagnification, eutrophication, the water cycle, biodiversity, and nonpoint source pollution. In addition to these central themes, Linus learns about food chains, primary and secondary production, predator-prey relationships, and nutrient loading. Linus' final visit with the King Gnome atop Cadillac Mountain includes a comprehensive review of concepts and vocabulary, and offers a new concept, "nonpoint source conservation," as a partial solution to nonpoint source pollution.

In addition to learning from wise gnomes, Linus meets inquisitive trolls who ask questions at the end of every chapter. Students will be challenged by these trolls to consider the concepts in the text and how they relate to issues in the students' lives and communities.

The book's many full-page pen and watercolor illustrations were created by Brunswick artist Thaddeus Lyford. These colorful illustrations depict many specimens of flora and fauna indigenous to Maine, as well as visual representations of ecological concepts.

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*The Watershed Journey of Linus Loon* is accompanied by two handbooks. The Educator Handbook provides background information on the central ecological concepts, and provides a thorough correlation of the text to the State of Maine Learning Results. The Student Handbook includes vocabulary from each chapter as well as each chapter's Troll Questions.

*The Watershed Journey of Linus Loon* is available to educators in hardcopy free of charge, and may also be downloaded at the Linus Loon Website (<http://www.maine.gov/spo/mcp/resources/linus/index.php>), where visitors will also find downloadable versions of the Educator and Student Handbooks. To request a hardcopy version of the book, contact the Maine Coastal Program at 207-287-1486.

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